30

POL 14 VIET S
(951)

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

R 1

Saigon 9-1-67

PAGE 01 SAIGON 04548 [illegible]

II
ACTION EA 19

INFO NSCE 00 CIAE 00 SSO 00 DODE 00 USIE 00 NSAE 00 CCO 00 SP 02 SAL 01
SS 35 GPM 03 SC 01 NSC 10 RSC 01 L 09 H 02 P 04 INR 07 IO 11
RSR 01 /109 W

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izzard DATE 12/23/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXCISION EXEMPTIONS ☐
DECLASSIFY ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

O 010930Z SEP 67 ZFF1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5943

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON 4648

REFS: A) STATE 30716, B) SAIGON 4315, C) SAIGON 4144.

1. OUR MOST RECENT CONTACTS WITH THE HUONG CAMP WERE FULLY REPORTED IN REFERENCES B AND C. THE UPI REPORT QUOTED REFERENCE A BEARS LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO ANYTHING THAT HAS PASSED BETWEEN EMBASSY OFFICERS AND TRAN VAN HUONG OR HIS ENTOURAGE.

2. EMBOFFS HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME EXPRESSED TO HUONG AND H FOLLOWERS THE IDEA THAT MANY PEOPLE WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED IF HUONG WERE TO WITHDRAW. WE HAVE ALSO SAID THAT WE THINK HE HAS A CHANCE OF WINNING AND THAT TO WITHDRAW WOULD DEPRIVE THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE OF A CHOICE WHICH MANY OF THEM OBVIOUSLY WISH TO MAKE. THESE REMARKS HAVE NEVER SEEMED TO DISTURB HUONG. ON THE CONTRARY, HE MADE ALMOST IDENTICAL STATEMENTS HIMSELF (REFERENCE C) ON AUGUST 27 WHEN HE TOLD US HE HAD

(1)

PAGE 2 RUMJH 0648 C O N F I D E N T I A L
DECIDED AGAINST WITHDRAWAL. FURTHERMORE HUONG HAS BEEN AT PAINS TO EXPRESS PERSONAL REGARD FOR EMBOFF WHO SEES HIM MOST

CONFIDENTIAL

CLASSIFICATION

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 0648 01 OF 02

FRIDUCHI [illegible] MOST RECENTLY ON AUGUST [illegible].

3. WE HAVE AT NO TIME SUGGESTED TO HUONG THAT HE SHOULD BECOME THIEU'S PRIME MINISTER, THOUGH WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR HOPE THAT ALL MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPS WILL WORK TOGETHER AFTER THE ELECTION. HUONG HAS OFTEN BEEN ASKED THIS QUESTION BY CORRESPONDENTS, MOST RECENTLY AT HIS AUGUST 19 PRESS CONFERENCE (SAIGON 0580) WHERE HE STATED HE WOULD NOT TAKE THE JOB UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. WE HAVE NOT BUT NOT STOPPED DIRECT CONTACT WITH HUONG AND COMPANY. EMBOFF [illegible] IN FACT HAD APPOINTMENT WITH HUONG EVENING SEPTEMBER 1.

5. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME OF HIS SUPPORTERS MADE SOME REMARKS TO UPI WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT WE HAD URGED HIM TO STAY IN THE RACE. HUONG MAY THINK IT USEFUL TO ASSUME A PUBLIC STANCE OF INDEPENDENCE VIS-A-VIS THE EMBASSY, AND HE OR OTHERS MAY HAVE OVEREMPHASIZED THE POINT IN A CONVERSATION WITH A REPORTER.

5. THE UPI ACCOUNT MAY BE A DISTORTED REFLECTION OF OUR ADVISE TO SEVERAL CANDIDATES AFTER THE DONG VA AFFAIR. AT THAT TIME

PAGE 3 RUMJIR [illegible] C O N F I D E N T I A L
WE TOOK THE POSITION THAT ALL CONCERNED, INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT, SHOULD PROMPTLY DISCUSS THE BEST WAY TO GET THE CAMPAIGN STARTED AGAIN. WHETHER IT IS A DELIBERATELY CONTRIVED VERSION IS HARD TO SAY BUT IT OBVIOUSLY COULD BE.

BUNKER

CONFIDENTIAL